



JOAN BALLWEG

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41ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**AB 658: Academic Excellence Scholarships
Testimony by State Representative Joan Ballweg
Before the Assembly Committee on Education
February 12, 2008**

Thank you Chairman Davis and committee members for holding a hearing on this bill. Assembly Bill 658 makes a minor modification to the eligibility criteria for Wisconsin's Academic Excellence Higher Education Scholarship Program.

It is my belief that the legislature should try to encourage Wisconsin's brightest students to stay in Wisconsin. This scholarship is one tool to help accomplish that goal. Students must be enrolled, as a full-time student, in a participating Wisconsin institution of higher education by September 30th of the academic year following when he or she was designated a scholar.

Currently, these scholarships are awarded to the senior with the highest grade point average from each high school with enrollment of at least 80 students, but not more than 500 students. For each additional 500 students in enrollment, the school is awarded an additional scholarship, up to a total of six scholarships for schools with 2,500 or more in enrollment.

Data from 2006 shows that eighty-eight percent of the freshmen awarded the scholarship used it to attend a Wisconsin post secondary institution. That figure equates to 777 students, and according to the fiscal estimate this change would make an additional 90 students eligible.

The Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) administers the scholarship and has tie-breaking criteria if two or more students have the same grade point average (G.P.A.) In some cases, the scholarship recipient may not be eligible because they choose to attend a school outside Wisconsin, or decline the award for personal reasons. If the scholar's high school weights students grade point average differently, depending on the course work, then the student with the next highest G.P.A. is eligible to become the scholar. However, the problem arises when the school does not weight the G.P.A. differently based on course work, then the student with the next highest G.P.A. is not eligible to receive the scholarship.

This change is an issue of fairness and deserves your consideration. AB 658 is a companion bill to Senate Bill 168. When SB 168 was heard in the Senate an amendment was added, which changes the date for when schools must designate their scholar from February 15th to February 25th. AB 658 included that amendment when it was drafted.

Both the Higher Educational Aids Board and Department of Public Instruction support the changes in this bill.

If committee members have any questions, I would be happy to answer them.



State of Wisconsin Higher Educational Aids Board

James E. Doyle
Governor

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Connie L. Hutchison
Executive Secretary

DATE: January 22, 2008
TO: Academic Excellence Scholarship contact person
FROM: Nancy Wilkison, Higher Educational Aids Board
SUBJECT: 2008 Academic Excellence Scholarship Recipients

AB-658

THE ENCLOSED ORIGINAL PURPLE AES NOMINATION FORM SHOULD BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED BY **MARCH 1, 2008**.
MAIL TO: NANCY WILKISON, AES, HEAB, PO BOX 7885, MADISON, WI, 53707

General Information about the AES:

- ⇒ Wisconsin's top high school seniors are awarded the Academic Excellence Scholarship (AES). They must be citizens or permanent residents of the US and residents of Wisconsin.
- ⇒ By February 15, the high school must choose the senior with the highest cumulative grade point average as of the end of fall semester. High schools with enrollments above 500 may award more than one scholarship.
- ⇒ The AES provides up to \$2250 per year for tuition at a Wisconsin college or university for up to four years. The colleges at which the student may use the AES are listed on the back of this memo. When HEAB receives the names of the AES recipients, a form is sent to the student asking for the name of the college they will attend. HEAB notifies the college of the student's AES, and the college and HEAB jointly disburse the money and apply it directly to the student's tuition. We also send a presentational certificate for you to give your AES winners.

Information about this year's AES Nomination Form:

- ⇒ The **numbers** right after the name of your high school in your address on the purple form are, in order:
 - (a) the 4 digit identification code HEAB uses for your high school.
 - (b) your grades 9-12 enrollment as of the third Friday in September.
 - (c) the number of Academic Excellence Scholarships that may be awarded in your school.

Enrollment	Number of Scholarships
1-79	MAYBE 1
80-499	1
500-999	2
1000-1499	3
1500-1999	4
2000-2499	5
Over 2500	6

- ⇒ The scholarship recipient(s) you list should be the student(s) with the **highest cumulative GPAs** regardless of whether or not they plan to use the AES in-state. If you have any unique questions about this, please contact me.
- ⇒ If you have an **unweighted grading system**, wherein an A is worth the same number of grade points in all courses, you may list as alternates for the AES only those students who have the very same GPA as the winner of the AES.
- ⇒ If you have a **weighted grading system**, wherein an A may be worth more grade points in some courses than in others, then you may list as alternates for the AES the students with the next highest GPAs.
- ⇒ Please enter the cumulative GPA for each student **as it is shown on your official high school transcript**.

Note:

- ⇒ Please try to submit names exactly as the student wishes to have the name on the certificate.
- ⇒ Alert all recipients and alternates of their AES status as early as possible.
- ⇒ Statutes and the rules for the AES program can be found on our website: www.heab.wisconsin.gov
- ⇒ Nominations cannot be changed once they are received at HEAB. Errors are handled by the school.
- ⇒ Contact me, Nancy Wilkison: 608-267-2213, or nancy.wilkison@wisconsin.gov, or HEAB/AES PO 7885 Madison WI 53707

These are the colleges at which the Academic Excellence Scholarship may be used:

Wisconsin Technical Colleges	UW System Colleges	Wisconsin Independent Colleges	Wisconsin Universities
Blackhawk	Baraboo	Alverno	Eau Claire
Chippewa Valley	Barron County	Bellin College of Nursing	Green Bay
Fox Valley	Fond du Lac	Beloit	La Crosse
Gateway	Fox Valley	Cardinal Stritch	Madison
Lakeshore	Manitowoc	Carroll	Milwaukee
Madison Area	Marathon County	Carthage	Oshkosh
Mid-State	Marinette	Concordia	Parkside
Milwaukee Area	Marshfield	Edgewood	Platteville
Moraine Park	Richland	Lakeland	River Falls
Nicolet Area	Rock County	Lawrence	Stevens Point
North Central	Sheboygan	Maranatha Baptist	Stout
Northeast	Washington County	Marian	Superior
Southwest	Waukesha	Marquette	Whitewater
Waukesha County		Milwaukee Institute of Art	
Western WI		Milwaukee School of Engineering	
WI Indianhead	Tribal Colleges	Mount Mary	
	Lac Courte Oreilles	Northland	
	Menominee Nation	Ripon	
		Silver Lake	
		St. Norbert	
		Viterbo	
		Wisconsin Lutheran	

If the student does not attend one of these colleges, he or she will not be eligible to receive funds from the AES. When the student returns the HEAB form that will be mailed to students in March, he or she will use the release portion of the form.

Below is a **sample** (Not to be used by school) release form that is sent to the student.

Release Statement:

I do not intend to accept the Academic Excellence Scholarship. I forfeit it, with the understanding that my forfeiture is permanent, and I release it for the use of an alternate student in my high school class.

Name of Student: _____ **SAMPLE ONLY** _____

Name of High School: _____

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Parent: _____ Date: _____

Name of College: (Optional) _____

Higher Educational Aids Board
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